CHANGE FOR THE BETTER WITH ENERGY STAR

Products that earn the ENERGY STAR® prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. www.energystar.gov

Top 5 Ways to Cool Your World with ENERGY STAR®

Cool Your World with ENERGY STAR this summer. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends these simple steps to help homeowners save energy, stay comfortable, and help protect our environment for future generations. Because most electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels which releases greenhouse gas emissions into our air, using less energy at home is one way to reduce the risks of global warming. We can all help "cool our world" by making energy-efficient choices at home.

1. RAISE YOUR "COOL" IQ

Did you know that half your energy bill goes toward heating and cooling your home? How about the fact that the average home can be responsible for twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as the average car? Learning how energy is used in your home is an important step toward cutting energy costs, improving your home's energy efficiency and protecting the environment. Raise your "cool" IQ by visiting ENERGY STAR @ Home (www.energystar.gov/home) and learn what you can do in your home to make energy-efficient improvements and get energy saving tips and advice for your entire home.

2. GET A CHECKUP

Dirt and neglect are the number one causes of system failure. Schedule an annual, pre-season maintenance checkup with a licensed contractor to ensure your cooling system is operating efficiently and safely – as well as identify problems early. Then be sure to clean or change your system's air filter according to the filter's instructions -- generally once a month. Keep it clean to keep it efficient.

If your cooling system is more than 12 years old and needs replacing, consider an energy-efficient model. Be sure to look for the ENERGY STAR when replacing a central air conditioner or heat pump. It's important to get the right sized cooling system for your home and have it installed properly, so your new investment will deliver on its full energy-performance promise. Properly sized and installed, regularly maintained energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment, along with properly sealed ducts, can save homeowners as much as 20 percent on annual energy costs.

3. SEAL THE DEAL

Don't let the hot air in and your cool air out. Find and seal air leaks that cause drafts and make your cooling system work overtime. You or a licensed contractor can follow ENERGY STAR Home Sealing recommendations to tighten your home's "envelope" -- outer walls, ceiling, windows, and floors. If you experience uneven temperatures in parts of your home, have your ducts inspected. They may need to be sealed and insulated to better deliver air throughout your living space and prevent loss of cooled air to areas between walls, ceilings, and floors. Either project could save you up to 10 percent on energy bills each year.

4. GET WITH THE PROGRAM

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Save energy by taking advantage of periods in the day when your home doesn't need to be kept as cool. A programmable thermostat, set and used properly, can save about $100 in energy costs each year. ENERGY STAR qualified models have options and settings that keep you comfortable, without wasting energy. Ceiling fans, when used right, can also cut home energy use – turn the thermostat up several degrees while using the fans to deliver the extra cooling comfort. Remember, a ceiling fan doesn't cool the room – it cools you, so turn the fan off when you leave.

5. KEEP YOUR COOL

Look for the ENERGY STAR when purchasing products for your home. In addition to heating and cooling equipment, you can find the ENERGY STAR on products in more than 40 product categories, including lighting, consumer electronics, and appliances. When you choose an ENERGY STAR, you get a product that protects our environment by meeting strict energy efficiency criteria set by EPA and the Department of Energy. These products offer performance and reliability, while operating more efficiently, saving energy, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

For more steps to help protect the environment from home, please visit www.energystar.gov.